Prayer and the Spiritual Life

FRASER

"The Christian's Vital Breath."

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Prayer and the Spiritual Life

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BY REV. J. A. FRASER

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God."

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Prefatory Note.

THE chapters composing this book having previously appeared as articles in the "Living Way;" and testimonies as to their helpfulness, having been received from time to time; at the urgent request of friends, they have been arranged in this present and more permanent form.

That the Author of the great truths herein expressed may be pleased to use this humble means for the promotion of the Spiritual and Prayer Life which they present, is the desire of the writer and we earnestly solicit the prayers of our readers to this end.

—J. A. FRASER.

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CHAPTER 1.

"That They all May be One"

"For we are members one of another." Each vitally and directly joined to the Head and so, through Him, incorporated into one another. The interests of each member center not in itself, but in the Head, and the Head is equally related to and interested in each member. In Him, therefore, each is as important to each, as each to itself. —*Bishop Moule.*

AS is the man, so are his prayers. What he is; that he *really prays*. In the prayers of our Lord we have a legacy of knowledge. They tell us His attitude toward His own, what He desires and purposes for them. They point out His present ministry and prophesy His coming glory. They also show His relation to the Father. But more, we see through them, as through an open window, into the secret chamber of His own holy character. "He was full of grace and truth." What a marvelous disclosure of that grace is portrayed in this High Priestly prayer!

The great object of the Gospel by John

is to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. This applies to every part of it and so to this wonderful prayer. It is the prayer of the *Son of God.*

Oh, how sacred and wonderful it is,—its spirit of worship and thanksgiving, as also its petitions for the Church of all time. Nor are we to see it as only the record of His prayer on that night. It is much more. For as it relates to His Body, the Church, it is the *text of His prayer for this age.* It tells us what Jesus is praying now! Did we rightly consider this, oh, with what reverence we should read it and wait for its spirit of holy love to inspire our praying. If we really see that the love which died for us is *now*, in the same sacrificial spirit of the cross, pouring itself forth in intercession on our behalf; our very heart and attitude must become a hushed and glad "Amen," as our constant response to its ceaseless and holy action.

Oh, if we heard our Lord in prayer in an adjoining room; if we heard Him mention our names and tell the Father what He desired for us, would we not give ourselves

up to have those desires of His fulfilled? Would we not give our whole life to carry out, so far as we could, what we heard Him pray! In this chapter, (*John 17.*) *we hear Him praying!* And His prayer is just as necessary as was His dying on the cross, and as really a part of His great redemptive work. Without it, no soul could be saved. It is through His intercession that He is now the "Living Way" for us, the door to all the love of our Father and the glorious channel through which streams forth to the Church, every moment, the blessed Spirit of God!

Observing the several petitions, we see that the one of most frequent occurrence, that which seems to embody *the great burden of the prayer*, is, "That they all may be one." In humble, earnest prayer, we would ask Him to show us this oneness or unity of His people. It will help us to see the prayer in its relation to the last discourse which immediately precedes it. He had just said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." The unity centers in Himself.

ONE IN HIS LIFE.

His "power over all flesh," (*Verse 2.*)

He now exercises in prayer to continuously "give eternal life" to all His own. In His praying, we see the great, living Vine rooting in the love of God, and giving its own life to all its branches. His praying is life-giving and it is thus it creates and maintains the unity of His people! It is therefore a union so vital and Divine as to be beyond anything which man could form, and more even than something *formed by Him.* It subsists not only as the work of His hands, but as the *very life* which He is! In Christ and His true Church, we see no more twain, but "*one New Man.*"

ONE IN HIS HOLINESS.

"Sanctify them" and, "for their sakes I sanctify Myself." We must recognize a work of heart-cleansing by the Spirit as He applies the blood and the truth in the individual life. But essential holiness is more than a pure heart. It is more even, than the work of the adorable Spirit in the heart. It is nothing less than the perfected nature of Christ, Himself, emplanted and momentarily imparted by the action of the Holy Spirit within us and the ceaseless praying of Christ for us. The meal-offering, con-

sisting of fine flour, mingled with oil, is the type of the human and Divine nature of Christ, Who is the Embodiment and Source of all our sanctification. Holiness in us can only subsist by a faith which every moment feeds upon Him. Apart from Him, it could not continue for a single moment. More necessary than the sun is to its light and every moment of the summer day; is the Person of Jesus, Himself, to the beauty of holiness in our life and every moment of that life.

ONE IN HIS MISSION.

"Not of the world even as I am not of the world." "As Thou hast sent Me, *even so . . .*" (*Verses 14, 18.*) "The Church is Jesus Christ on the earth;" therefore, its mission and His are one. Schism and self-interest should have no place within its pale. The prophecy "How beautiful are the feet of *Him*, etc.," when quoted in Romans 10, reads, "How beautiful are the feet of *them*, etc." He and they are to live, bear and proclaim the same glad tidings to earth. "All that Jesus *began* both to do and teach," the

wonderful work of revealing and imparting the love of God to the lost of earth; all this He meant to continue through His Body, the Church. And exactly this was what He did in apostolic times and until the Church lost her first love. Had not the world-spirit come in and weakened the vital union with her Lord; had not the strength of human self-assertion usurped the place, and so grieved the Holy Spirit of God; had no sectional spirit entered to divide the Body of Christ; or human wisdom and man's methods and plans superseded those of the great Head of the Church; had she not busied herself with a thousand things never included in her mission; who could conceive her glorious career! With Pauline fire and force her missionaries would have preached in every land. Long ere this her Gospel ministry would have been completed, sin and Satan banished, and the glory of God filling the whole earth.

Does some one say, "The delay has been of God,—His secret and foreordained purpose?" No, perish the thought! Was it His purpose that Israel should have

stumbled on in unbelief for forty years and died in the wilderness? Not at all. "For with whom was He *grieved* forty years?" It was because they "limited the Holy One of Israel," vexed and grieved the Holy Spirit that they did not within a few weeks march into the land, sweep all enemies before them, and plant the banner of Jehovah in Canaan.

Even so, the Church has grieved and failed her Lord. Oh, that in humble penitence we and all members of His true Church may confess, repent, and be restored to such fellowship, as to be once more subject to the control of her glorious Lord and Head, and in His name, go forth to finish His and her mission on the earth.

ONE IN THE SPIRIT.

"Even as We are one." There is a wonderful picture of this unity in Psalm 133;—"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." This allusion to the high priest prefigures the anoint-

ing of Christ and His Church. The Holy Spirit like the descending oil comes down to the feeblest member of His Body, uniting all in Him.

Marvelously clear and replete is the teaching of this great truth in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There we behold believers as "members of Christ, of His body, of His flesh and bones" and "members one of another," each a "supplying joint" in the "one body;" and there we are exhorted to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit." Yes, to *keep*, not to *make* it. We cannot *form* it, but in the Spirit we can *find* it, and "praying" in the same "Holy Spirit" we can "keep ourselves in *the love of God*" and thus shall be fulfilled His prayer, "that the love wherewith *Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them.*" Oh, such love. He cannot rest until He rests in us! until with His own love, we so love each other as to present this,

ONENESS IN MANIFESTATION.

"That the world may believe that the Father sent the Son." Seeing such a

miracle of grace,—human selfishness and separation lost in the holy love and unity of Heaven, they shall believe and be saved.

When love prevails the Church is truly and manifestly united. Without love, no "Federation of Churches" can unite her, and with love, no variety or differentiation as to outward forms, etc., can divide her. This unity is to be so *manifest* that the *world can see it*, and in it *see that love* which reigns in the Holy Trinity in Heaven, the love that gave the Lord Jesus to the world, that love which was embodied in His holy Person and because of which He lived and died for the lost, and now lives to breathe forth that holy love in ceaseless intercession. That this love and oneness may be realized in all its truth and beauty, our Lord is *now praying!* What are we doing?

Nor are we to think of His praying as just petitioning the Father that this may be, but as the effectual means by which it is, every moment, procured and maintained. "That they all, etc.;" the "that" means "so that." His praying just now, receives for us and imparts to us, life, holi-

ness, love, joy,—all that we need to really live in, and by, and like Him. In His praying He is ever giving Himself to us! Oh, for enlarged receiving capacity on our part.

And we would know, too, that as we pray *in the Spirit*, all this, up to our measure, is being effected by our prayers. We *participate in His praying!* May we become a prayer, "that they all may be one."

ONE IN HIS GLORY.

"The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them."

Wonderful! and yet it is even so. The first petition in this prayer is "Glorify Thy Son, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." So really had He parted with that glory for our sakes, that He must needs pray to have it given back to Him! In its stead He is given another glory, the glory of accomplishing the world's redemption! This involved the cross with all its humiliation, suffering and shame;—"The cup which My Father gave Me." To the natural

mind this was the very opposite of glory, but to faith's vision, this *manifested* His highest glory. It was not only the *way* to glory, but it *was His glory revealed*. It was the moral perfection of the Lamb of God expressed. And the throne-life is just this moral excellence rewarded and revealed in its heavenly effulgence and beauty of holiness. The Father's estimate of the moral glory concealed in the darkness of the cross is revealed in the radiance of the throne. Its splendor is Heaven's speech as to the worth and worthiness of the Crucified.

As the Son of God He received back, and now possesses the glory which He gave up for us, and, in addition to this, the glory of the cross. And now, this twofold glory is His, not only as the Eternal Son, but also as the Son of Man. Therefore, oh child of God, His glory is given to thee, for He is thy life. He is the Head and we are the members of His Body, the Church. He, the Adam glorified, and we the "many sons" whom He is bringing to glory. "If we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified together."

"With me, wheresoe'er I wander,
That great Presence goes;
That unutterable stillness
Undisturbed repose;
Everywhere the blessed stillness
Of that holy place,
Silence of the love that worships
Dumb before His face."

CHAPTER 2.

Waiting . . on God . . .

Wait on thy God continually.—*Hosea 12:6.*
A God who worketh for him that waiteth for Him.—*Isa. 64:4.*

"WAITING on God," it has been said, "is the keynote of life." This, we need scarcely remark, is a strong saying. But is it *too* strong? If it is not, then, alas for the lives of many of us, for surely, they are pitched to another key. The very thought of continually waiting on God is to many a burden, a form of bondage, or at least, something of minor import. Is this because they mistake the true nature of waiting and so underestimate its worth? Or are those in error who exalt its importance? The former, we sincerely believe, is the fact in the case. And personally, we feel that our highest concept of this spirit and attitude is far beneath what in truth it is.

One reason for our so believing is, that Satan so opposes this waiting. If any doubt this, let them begin, in real earnest, to form the habit; to persist with some degree of intensity, concentration and purpose to wait on God, and we feel sure that their doubts in this regard will soon disappear.

A second reason is because of the large place the idea holds in Scripture. In this book of Isaiah see 8;17, 25;9, 26;8, 30;15-18, 33;2, 40;31, 42;4, 49;23, 51;5, 60;9, 64;4; then see its oft recurrence in the Psalms and elsewhere throughout the Old Testament.

In the third place we so believe because of its place in the lives of the saints. Rev. Andrew Murray in his book, "Waiting on God," (a classic on the subject,) tells us,—"It is as if I myself am only beginning to see how the deepest truth concerning God, and our relation to Him, center in this waiting on God, and how very little in our life, and work, we have been surrounded by its life and spirit."

Dr. R. A. Torrey started on his evangelistic tour around the world having as

his motto, Psalm 62;5, "My soul wait thou only upon God."

The saintly life of Brother Lawrence was pitched to this same keynote; sounded in his favorite phrase, "The Practice of the Presence of God."

The devout Fenelon, who was so like his Lord, that even an infidel had to confess that he must either forsake his company or yield to the persuasive charm of his influence and become a Christian, tells us that "recollection is the soul of religion."

The sainted Faber said, "We must wait for God long, meekly, in the wind and wet, in the thunder and lightning, in the cold and dark. Wait and He will come. He never comes to those who do not wait. He does not go their road."

And in the fourth place this is our conviction because it was the key to the Master's life. It was He, Who through the Psalmist said, "I have set the Lord always before Me; because He is at My right hand I shall not be moved. . . Thou wilt show Me the path of life." His ear was opened, ever listening for the Father's

voice. He was "quick of scent in the fear of the Lord." (*Isa. 11;3. Marg.*) Through the exquisite intuitions of His pure nature He ever found the invisible Presence and awaited the Father's time, word and working. Thus He did nothing of Himself. With listening ear, watching eye, and waiting heart, He ever heard, saw, received, and expressed all that the Father gave Him to do and to speak. In this holy waiting, He was constantly shown and spiritually led in the "path of life." (*Psa. 16;11. Acts 2;28.*)

Then further, its significance is seen in the many forms of the word, (*See an analytical concordance.*) and its various associations. It is connected with revelation, renewal, joy and judgment. It is made a plea in prayer, a ground of confidence, a condition of blessings unnumbered and of God's own working for His people.

It has been remarked, however, that this attitude points especially to the life of the Old Testament and does not particularly apply to this dispensation. This mistake arises from a lack of the knowledge of true

waiting on God and of what the New Testament really teaches in this regard.

While the words, "wait," "waiting," occur less frequently in the New, yet we find their equivalent constantly, and the great truth pervades the whole New Testament. "The word 'abide,'" says a well-known teacher, "sums up all that is contained in the different forms of the word 'wait' in the Old Testament." As we trace this word, we find that in the original it occurs more than fifty times, in the writings of the Apostle John alone, and is the word so frequently used by our Lord in His last discourse to the inner circle. If we turn, however, to 1st. Cor. 2;9, where we actually find our text, *(Isa. 64;4.)* in the New Testament, we see the exact word which the Holy Spirit has given us for the word, "wait." It is the great word "love." Ah, what meaning is now crowded into the little word "wait." What heights and depths it contains! Now we see "waiting on God" to be "the greatest thing in the world;" and its only adequate definition, 1st. Cor. 13, the Holy Spirit's exposition of love.

Waiting and Knowing God.

The knowledge of God is our one need. This knowledge can only come by spiritual revealing. It cannot be learned or found by mental effort. Only God can give this revelation. "The hidden man of the heart," the new nature, can alone receive it. The *natural* in us *cannot* receive the things of God. Our minds may be full of thought-truth about God; but the life-truth through which "the knower and the Known become one," this is the exclusive property of the new man. Only like can truly know like; so our capacity for knowing God, and the knowledge itself are equally from Him, and are ours in so far as we "abide in," "love," or "wait on" Him. When we see this, we glory not in men, as the Corinthian Christians were doing, but in the cross, that which brings all the glory of man to naught. We glory not in the wisdom of man, which is foolishness, but in that which is the wisdom of God, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. As we know God, we glory in Him alone; His greatness and goodness; and in our own infirmities; yea,

our utter impotence. Man reduced to a mere zero,—a capacity; God, all in all. These are the marks of knowing God, the results of waiting upon Him, and hence, in large part, at least, the insipidity of this truth to the natural man,—it means his own undoing.

It is not enough however, that we possess the *power* to know, we need to cultivate a holy acquaintance with Him Who calls us friends. We need to know not only Jesus as Saviour; but God in His tri-personality, Father, Son, and Spirit. This requires time for communion, training of heart and mind to be still in His great Presence. "Be still and know." We need trysting times, the morning or evening watch.

Waiting and Renewal.

"They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." "The inward man is renewed day by day." All nature teaches us this great truth. As vegetable life needs the constant renewal of sunlight, rain and dew; as our bodies need daily bread, fresh water and new oxygen, so, the life we have from God is ever depen-

dent upon Him. Of it, He says, "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep night and day." This is the blessed life of trust. The mind stayed on Him, the heart kept in peace, the whole life sustained and renewed continually. "He fainteth not, neither is weary." They that wait on Him neither faint nor are weary. Waiting on Him, we become like Him.

Thus too, we are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. And thus, we are changed into His likeness. Beholding, we are transformed. Our progressive transformation is only realized through a constant renewing of our hearts and minds, and renewal of the Holy Spirit; and these are ours momentarily as we wait upon Him. Astronomers tell us that a highly sensitized plate, left over night under the open Heavens, photographs stars never discovered by the most powerful telescope. So it is only the tender, waiting heart that can receive and show forth the deep and hidden things of God.

Waiting and Working.

"A God like unto Thee, Who worketh for him that waiteth for Thee." How much waste there has been in our haste in the Lord's work. How much effort, often, and so little fruit! A good deal of noise but very little power. Oh, we need to learn the secret of *His* working through our passive waiting. We need to let God work in us both to will and to do; then in the spirit of waiting and worship to work out His perfect will. Waiting on Him, we learn to work with Him, to move as He moves. This is the rhythm of service, and the secret of all great lives and great achievements in the work of the Lord. This simple method of doing God's will is the rest of the soul; the meat, duty and delight of the new man. This too, is the great *principle* of all *intercessory service;* it is as the heart abides in worshipful waiting that one comes to know what to pray, and when, and how; working with our great High Priest because ever waiting on Him.

Waiting for His Son from Heaven.

The waiting life is a constant recipient of the blessings of God. This is a necessary law of the new life. It is in this devout waiting on Him, that His constant giving and our constant receiving of the Holy Spirit are possible. "If Thou see Me when I am taken" was Elisha's last condition of receiving the "double portion."

So it will be with the coming of our Lord. Men differ as to the doctrine, but all to whom it is a living and "blessed hope" agree that waiting with the heart in holy expectancy, is the one attitude on the part of His bride, worthy of the great event and of the coming Bridegroom;—indeed, without which it could not be. My soul wait thou only upon God. Amen.

"Mine be the reverent, listening love
That waits all day on Thee,
With the service of a watchful heart,
Which no one else can see."

The Spirit of Prayer

The Spirit, Himself, maketh intercession.
—*Rom. 8:26.*

BY "spirit of prayer" is often meant "prayer atmosphere" or "influence;" or the desire, sincerity, and earnestness manifested in prayer. At present, however, we use the phrase to signify something more. The new man in Christ Jesus has *a spirit of prayer*. Indeed, prayer is his vital breath.

But there is another Whose intercession is as mighty and effectual as that of our Great High Priest at the Father's right hand. This, we know, is the Holy Spirit.

He is the Spirit of Prayer.

The work of prayer is far too great, even for the new man; but all the help and re-inforcement he needs is supplied by this One, "called along side of." He is the

other Paraclete, Who helpeth our infirmities in prayer.

We have but to glance through the New Testament to see how intimately prayer is connected with the blessed third Person of the Holy Trinity. His coming on Pentecost, according to the words of our Lord, (*John 16;26.*) marked a new epoch in prayer. And in the Acts of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the fifth book of the New Testament, we see prayer connected with the entire ministry of the Church, and its very leaders (*Acts 6;3.*) actually

GIVING THEMSELVES TO PRAYER.

The summary of the offices of the Spirit, (*Rom. 8.*) presents Him as pre-eminently, "The Spirit of Prayer," praying with unutterable groanings in the believer's heart and making intercession for all the saints. In other Scriptures, as Eph. 6;18, and Jude 20;21, we see different aspects of the same great truth. We have prayer *for* the Spirit,—He is given in answer to prayer; prayer *in* the Spirit,—He is the sphere in which the new man prays. Then we have prayer *by* the Spirit. This

is the Holy Spirit, Himself, praying.

Two important features of His praying are; that having come in the name of another, that of Jesus, (*John 14;26.*) He never prays in His own name. Nor does He pray, so far as we know, independently of the Church, but in and through it, prompting its every member to pray in harmony with its Head, the Lord Jesus. Oh, the condescending grace of the blessed Spirit! How He hides Himself!

His praying for the individual in whose heart He dwells is expressed with singular beauty in the Epistle of James, chapter four, (*See R. V. Marg.*) "That Spirit which He made to dwell in us yearneth for us even unto jealous envy." Who can fathom the depth of these words? They breathe the tender, holy affection of the blessed Spirit, His personal love for the individual person and for the whole Church. It is only in union with this praying of the Spirit that our prayer is truly effectual. And how strong and vast becomes the prayer-life of anyone where the Spirit is neither quenched nor grieved and has full liberty in prayer. It is the Spirit Who gives us

True Vision in Prayer.

Narrow vision means a narrow soul and a small prayer-ministry. The Spirit gives the larger vision; not through mental pictures, simply, but by enlarging the sympathies, causing us to feel what He feels; prompting us to pray, and thus lifting us to a higher level whence we can see the great prayer-fields calling for laborers, and vice-versa, laborers needing just this broad sphere of fellowship and ministry in the Spirit; for this labor is also life.

No local assembly or denomination is large enough for the prayer-fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And nothing less, than "all prayer for all saints," at "all seasons" is normal or natural to anyone really abiding in the fulness of life in the Holy Spirit. (*Eph. 6:18.*) And yet, such an one may be a very humble and hidden believer, little known by the busy workers of the great Church.

The Holy Spirit intercedes by praying in us and prompting us to prayer. It is ever His desire that "our love may abound yet more and more," that in us He may

"fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power." And it is as we become fitter instruments in His hand for this sweet and holy service that we come to know the meaning of

Bearing Burdens in Prayer.

By this we mean, not simply the interest or uneasiness we may feel as a result of knowing the need. This may be the channel through which the burden comes, but it is not necessarily the burden, itself. A soul laboring under a burden of prayer has sometimes to leave a meal or a meeting to breathe out, alone with God, heart-yearnings, too great, too tender, and too deep for expression in words. We have known a few such souls, and doubtless there are many. Yet, compared with the great body of people who pray, one is constrained to believe they are wonderfully rare.

In the evangelism of Charles G. Finney there were many such. Hear what he says, —"These strong desires strongly illustrate the strength of God's feelings. They are like the real feelings of God for

impenitent sinners. When I have seen, as I sometimes have, the amazing strength of love for souls that has been felt by Christians, I have been wonderfully impressed with the amazing love of God, and His desires for their salvation. The case of a certain woman, of whom I read, in a revival, made the greatest impression upon my mind. She had such an unutterable compassion and love for souls that she actually panted for breath. What must be the strength of the desire which God feels when His Spirit produces in Christians such amazing agony, such throes of love, such travail,—God has chosen the best word to express it,—it is travail of the soul.

I have seen a man of as much strength of intellect and muscle as any man in the community, fall down prostrate, absolutely overpowered by his unutterable desires for sinners. I know this is a stumbling-block to many; and it always will be, as long as there remain in the Church so many blind and stupid professors of religion. But I cannot doubt that these things are the work of the Spirit of God. Oh, that the whole Church could be so filled with the Spirit as

to travail in prayer, till a nation should be born in a day!

Said a good man to me, 'Oh, I am dying for the want of strength to pray. My body is crushed; the world is on me, and how can I forbear praying?' I have known that man to go to bed absolutely sick, for weakness and faintness under the pressure. And I have known him pray as if he would do violence to Heaven, and then have seen the blessing come as plainly in answer to prayer, as if it was revealed, so that no person could doubt it, any more than if God had spoken from Heaven. Shall I tell you how he died? He prayed more and more, and he used to take the map of the world before him and pray and look over the different countries, and pray for them, till he absolutely expired in his room praying. Blessed man! He was the reproach of the ungodly, and of carnal, unbelieving professors; but he was the favorite of Heaven, and a prevailing prince in prayer.''

This is much more than asking God's blessing or even asking God to work in behalf of any. It is nothing less than a

Divine operation of the Spirit. It is God at work in and through the one who prays. This is the "supplication which availeth much in its working." (*James 5:16, R. V.*) It is not simply asking that something be done; but it is doing that something through co-operation with God.

Who does not cry, "Oh God, grant us a revival of this spirit of prayer throughout Thy Church!" And, may all who thus cry also by faith receive, and begin at once, though feebly, it may be, at first, this *praying in the Spirit.*

CHAPTER 4.

Better Prayer

God having provided some better thing for us. —*Heb. 10;40.*

"NEW prayer, prayer on the highest level of prayer," says Dr. A. T. Pierson, "is the greatest need of missions to-day." What is true of missions, is true also, of the entire cause of Christ. We need new and better prayer.

"Better" is a comparative word; it implies the good and the best. It is not our intention, however, to compare the levels or degrees of prayer, (for there are many,) and decide upon their relative value; but in a simple and general way to point out a distinction which brings to us a truth of infinite worth; namely,

GOD'S BETTER WAY OF PRAYER

for all believers, in the New Covenant, as compared with that of Old Testament times. "For through Him we both have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father." (*Eph. 2;18.*)

On seeing something of the need, the duty, and the blessed privilege of prayer, who has not resolved to pray more and better; adopted new forms, methods, etc., only to find that, good as all these have been, in their place, they do not suffice to make prayer the joyous, triumphant ministry it is meant to be. Something more vital is needed.

We Need a New Vision!

We need to see Jesus, and prayer as related to Him.

But first, a glance at the place given to prayer in the Old Testament, will help us. What a mighty factor it was! "The victory or defeat of armies, the rise and fall of nations, as well as the life and death of individuals, were suspended on prayer.

Prayer carried back the shadow on the dial ten degrees, and added fifteen years to the good king's life. Prayer stood between the living and the dead, and stayed the destroyers march through the camp of Israel. Again, prayer sent forth the destroyer into the camp of the enemies of Israel, in a night extinguishing the whole army. Prayer fed

the hungry and clothed the naked, and comforted the widow, and blessed the fatherless, and healed the sick, and raised the dead. Prayer saved Nineveh from destruction, and would have saved Sodom, had there been in it ten righteous persons. Prayer averted or delayed many a threatened evil from the chosen people of God, and delivered them from the hand of many an oppressor, and brought them back from their captivity in Babylon, and rebuilt their temple. Prayer shut the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire."

Prayer which produced such results was certainly great and good; while as yet the better way of prayer, as now revealed and realized in the New Covenant, was all unknown.

"The difference between the first and second covenant," it has been said, "is the difference between the blood of animals, and the blood of the Son of God." We might add, that the difference between prayer in the first and second covenant is the difference between the praying of Moses, its representative and mightiest intercessor, and that of the Son of God. The

first was good, but the second infinitely greater and better.

NONE OTHER EVER PRAYED LIKE CHRIST.

In Him, the disciples saw the better praying of the new covenant and asked, "Lord teach us to pray." But even His personal Presence, example and precept were all insufficient to bring to them or to us, in actual possession, the secret of New Testament prayer. Indeed it was not until His last night with them, ere He died, that He even taught them its deeper truths.

In His last discourse they learn that He is the Vine and they are the branches. He is the Great High Priest to Whom all rights in prayer, and power to pray have been committed. In this discourse the expression, "In My name" occurs six times in connection with prayer and once with the coming of the Holy Spirit. This means that henceforth all true prayer must be "in His name," that is in vital union with Himself.

Moses had power in prayer in so far as he pleased God in what he was and did; It was because he was "faithful in all his

house as a servant" that his intercession prevailed. But our Intercessor and High Priest is the "Well Beloved Son," the Father's delight forever. He is the Royal Priest and Perfect Minister in the heavenly sanctuary.

He is the Friend of God and Man

tried and true. Yea more, the Man, Christ Jesus is absolutely one with God. He is also one with us who believe; our "Friend at midnight." But the union is more than that of an external friend. He is the Vine, ever touched by all our infirmities, and ever in touch with all the tender sympathies of the Infinite for us! In His manifold capacity "He ever liveth to pray!" As the vine receives every moment from the earth and imparts to its branches all they need for life, growth and fruitage, so, He, the Vine, in the bosom of the Father, receives through His ceaseless intercession, life and love and all that we need for the "much fruit" and imparts the same to all His branches evermore.

All the "better promises," "better sacrifices," "better hope," and "better things,"

of the "better covenant" center in Him. Faith, love, worship, and all the elements which constitute perfect prayer inhere in Him! He is the personification of prayer. His holy Person is one ceaseless, silent appeal to the heart of God.

Who can measure His Power in Prayer!

Do we wonder that to His asking, the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth are given, (*Psa. 2.*) yea, the Kingdom, itself, and all things, with power to rule over all! He reigns because He prays. Here is the "better prayer"—prayer in the superlative degree! And here, is

God's Provision for our Praying.

The glory of the new covenant is seen in that all its commands are also enablings. Every prayer-precept has behind it a prayer-provision. Jesus, ever praying for us, brings us to share with Him His very own praying! It cannot be otherwise, for we are "members of Christ" and "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." Vital as the union of branch and vine: or that of heart and hand in the human body:

is our union with the blessed Christ in His life and Spirit and in His holy intercession before the Father! Sharing His life, we share His ministry. Truly the glory which the Father gave Him, He hath given to us. "A Spirit-baptized soul is one baptized into union with Christ, in His death, His burial, His resurrection and His ascended glory." (*Col. 3;3.*) The "bosom of the Father" is the place of power in prayer. And this, oh wonder of grace, is the true closet, into which we have entered, through Christ crucified. There we "ask and receive" and our joy is full. This is the meaning of praying "in His name."

Now the reason why no Old Testament saint, nor even the disciples before Pentecost, ever knew this, was, that it could not be known until the Spirit of Christ in His glory, should come down, and into their hearts. They saw and heard Him pray; but up to this time had no real fellowship with Him in prayer. "There is a suggestive gleam of this lack of fellowship in Luke 9;18, where we read, 'Jesus was alone praying, and His disciples were with Him.'" "Hitherto," said He, "ye have

asked nothing in My name, at that day, (Pentecost,) ye shall ask in My name."

Now if these great, yet simple principles have been revealed to us, just one more thing is needed, namely, to receive His Spirit, and surrender all to Him. This is what the disciples did on Pentecost. Then a new prayer-life began within them. It was the praying of the Spirit of Him Who was on the throne,—Jesus breathing His own prayer in and through them. A new world of intercession was open to them, and they resolved, "We will give ourselves unto prayer." Oh, that we might do likewise! Having surrendered all to our Lord, (and He only can show us what this means,) give Him time to take possession; daily wait upon Him for teaching and training in His praying. Let Him show us that "to be the perfect servants of His will, is to be the perfect masters of prayer."

Be silent unto Him, to find the praying of His Spirit within us. So tender, quiet and gentle are His holy yearnings in the heart, especially in their beginnings, that we, in our own praying, and haste, may miss them entirely, and so miss the

better praying which we so long to know, and instead of "praying in the Holy Ghost" keep on praying in ourselves even after we have received the Spirit.

"One with Jesus, the Mediator, and endeared to the Father's heart, by all that makes Him dear; approaching to the Father as if we were Christ! If one were thoroughly awake inwardly, he would not know how to bear himself for joy at the grant of such a privilege!"

CHAPTER 5.

"Pray Ye" . .
"Go Ye" . .

Considering the fearful consequences of it all, something like criminal negligence has marked for years, the attitude of the Church toward the matchless power of prayer for the world.—*Spear.*

BETWEEN these two utterances of our Lord lies the greater part of the Gospel by Matthew; but in spirit and meaning they are supplemental; and in every true missionary's heart, they meet and blend.

Every son of Aaron was a priest, but not all served in priestly ministry. To be born of the Spirit, is to be born a missionary and a priest; but many, it would seem, never awake to the fact, and consequently are of little use in the service. A missionary is a "sent one." "As the Father hath sent Me, so have I sent you," says our Lord. And we are all foreign missionaries; "In the world, but not of it." Pilgrims

and strangers but living missionaries, not simply staying or visiting. Sent forth by the Lord of glory on a mission for Him! And such a mission! For it is nothing less than to be

HIS WITNESSES

unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It is to give the Gospel to earth's perishing millions. To make Him known as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. It is to bear, not only the Gospel, but *Himself*, as the one light, life and hope of the hopeless and dying! It is to act as channels through which the living Lord shall reach and save those for whom He died!

Jesus having come, lived, died and lives again enthroned,

ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST!

A thousand millions of our race in utter ignorance of it all! The Church here as the one connecting link between Him and them! Lives there a man, in view of this, with soul so dead, who does not cry, "Lord awaken Thy people to a true sense of the situation?"

Think of His desire and all sufficiency for them! His command! His glory! Their dire distress and utter despair without Him! Our opportunity, the open door! Our responsibility, custodians of His Gospel, His Spirit, Himself! Holding in our hands the key to their eternal bliss! Our hope! What He can do through us! His coming! His reward! Surely to contemplate these great realities is to ask with new meaning, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" and to realize a new and mighty motive to living, giving, praying and going, worthy of true missionaries of the cross.

As we see the open doors, with so few entering them; the masses with broken, bleeding hearts groping in the darkness, the poor, helpless slaves of the awful tyranny of a merciless devil, without a ray of hope for anything better; we feel anew, oh, that Calvary's love might break our hearts in view of such a scene. Then, though our giving may have reached the maximum limit, and our going be impossible, we shall find another door; it is;

PACIFIC LUTHERAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Pray Ye!

As we look through, enter, and behold the vast, unoccupied territory of the prayer-world, and its vaster possibilities, our first petition will be, "Lord teach us to pray." And as we give ourselves to prayer, new light shines, for we have found, not only a new field of service, but a new sphere of life.

Here is a realm in which we may move and potentially touch all lands. It is the temple of His great Presence, where we realize the "Lo I am with you all the days," for truly He is with us when we are with Him in prayer. The supreme need of all mission work is that Christians know and enter upon their

Fellowship in Christ's Intercession.

Jesus is the Lord, the Spirit, the Life-giver, Whose Presence fills the spiritual world. Prayer in unison with Him is a life-giving ministry. The truly praying member of Christ's body is acting as nothing less than a channel of supply from Him to the other members of the same body.

The man of prayer is also a uniting

factor in the Church. His prayers cannot be limited to any class of Christians but must go out for *all* saints. Proceeding from Christ, the great center of all unity, they are the very power which effects and maintains the oneness of John seventeen. Hence, Paul labors in prayer "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love," and in thus laboring, is effecting that very unity for which he asks. (*Col. 2;2.*) In Paul's prayer, we see Christ actually realizing, bringing to pass, that unity of His body, so essential to all its growth and true service for Him. *This is how He does it!*

Further, this prayer-missionary is also

SUPPLYING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

to other laborers on the field. If we are truly praying, we may hear wafted to us, o'er land and sea, from many hearts, "Your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Christ." The prayer-fellowship for this age began on the day of Pentecost and has never since ceased. This is the true prayer-union, and has simply to be *believed and spiritually found and*

entered into, rather than formed by any outward organization. Through prayer, Pentecost is continued. Prayer perpetuates the pouring forth of the Spirit of "that day." It is both past and future, but always present in true prayer; that is, the past and future of Pentecost meet in the now, of prayer. Through the praying of Christ on the throne and His saints on earth, the Spirit, without ceasing, like light from the sun, flows from the Father's heart to all His children. Through prayer we receive and transmit this heavenly flow and flame of the Spirit of grace.

Then this laborer at home is also potentially abroad as well. And his prayer carries with it both a legal and dynamic power. Against the enemy it is authoritative in its demand and executive in effect. It is nothing less than redemptive power applied. It *enforces the claims of Calvary* against the power of Satan. It lays hold on the purchase of Christ's blood. It takes the field and holds it in the name of

"The Conqueror of Calvary."

The man of prayer is a warrior. Satan not

only hates him, but trembles before him. The prayer-host is the military power, which, in fellowship with its Lord, will finally eject Satan and his legions, not only from human hearts, but from his stronghold in the air. Hence, prayer and its promotion are no mere performance or play, but the highest form of service.

Oh, that our hearts may hear anew and respond to the call to enter more fully into this holy labor with our Lord. May we truly "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty." May we watch, pray, and praise every moment. May we live in the spirit and exercise of Eph. 6;18, to the glory of His name, the triumph of His people and cause, and the hastening of His coming and kingdom. Amen.

CHAPTER 5.

"In My Name" The Prayer-Tower

OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The name of the Lord (Jehovah) is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe. —*Prov. 18:10.*

WE may reverently insert the name, "Jesus" in place of that most sacred and mysterious Old Testament name, "Jehovah," for "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

To ancient Israel the tower was a familiar object. Often enclosed within a garden, it afforded quiet, seclusion and rest to prophets, watchmen and others who resorted thither. Israel's great prayer-tower, however, was the temple. We remember the words of Jesus, as He stood within its walls, "My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations;" and if we read Solomon's prayer at its dedi-

cation, (*2nd. Chronicles 6, and elsewhere,*) we see again and again that the house was built *for* the name, and *to* the name, and that the name might be known and feared by all people. Now we know that the temple in all its splendor was only a type, a two-fold type, first, of Christ's physical body, (*John 2;20,21.*) and second, of His mystical body the Church, (*Eph. 2;20,21.*) and therefore, of *every individual believer;* for every stone in this great building is itself a miniature temple. "Your body is the temple of God." (*1st. Cor. 3;16,17.*) That temple was for His name; but now, "God has visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." (*Acts 15;14.*) We who believe are among this people and are therefore identified with "that worthy name by which we are called." (*Jas. 2;7.*) As prayer was the one word in which all the worship and service of the ancient sanctuary centered; so now the most marked characteristic of the child of God is that he prays. His very personality is a living temple whose worship and service subsist in the spirit of prayer. This is his "vital breath."

"In My name!" To see something of the wonderful significance of this expression we need but remember that in His last discourse our Lord used it seven times; six times in connection with prayer, and once with the Holy Spirit, the great Inspirer and Helper in prayer.

We use the name of a person simply to designate and distinguish him from other persons. When we speak of Mr. Brown or Smith, we never stop to ask what is signified by the name, itself, we simply think of the person. Very different is the Biblical use of names. There the name not only marks off the person, but it tells what kind of a person it is. It is a key to his character.

Thus it is with the name of God. "It is meant to express His whole Divine nature and glory. And so, the name of Christ means His whole nature, His Person and work, His disposition and spirit." His name and Himself are so identified as to be inseparable. This being so, it follows, that to rightly use, or even to speak in the Spirit, this name, implies a close fellowship with Him;—nothing less than participation

in His nature. "In My Name." This wonderful phrase we may truly term *the Great Prayer Tower of the New Testament.* Observing some of its characteristics, we note that it is

A Tower of Righteousness

"The *righteous* runneth into it and is safe." The temple stood for the righteousness of Jehovah; hence the indignation of our Lord as He bids the unrighteous intruders withdraw from the sacred place. The name of Jesus stands for all the righteousness of God. And while this holy name may be formally attached to unrighteous prayers, yet no such prayer is ever truly offered "in His name." It is the "prayer of a righteous man" that "availeth much;"—the man who is right with God, through Christ, and whose life is upright in principle and practice.

The Great High Priest over the house of God, in Whose name we pray, "loved righteousness" and poured out His blood for its vindication and establishment. The rugged righteousness of Calvary is therefore the foundation on which this tower rests.

and all the prayers within this holy shrine, breathe out its very spirit and plead its merit. Prayer is a remembrance in Heaven of the righteous claims of our God and His Christ on the earth. It is the protest on earth against all Satan's rule and the petition for the righteousness of God to be established Hence the coming judgments, in order to this, are in answer to the prayers of the saints. (*Rev. 8:4,5.*) The righteous God will "avenge His own elect which cry unto Him day and night." We note further, that it is

A Tower of Strength.

"The name of the Lord is a *strong* tower." "The man of prayer is a man of power." Prayer in Jesus' name has power with God,—power to obtain whatsoever it asks. It has legal power too, in the court of Heaven: for "all authority is given unto Him."

It has power over all the power of Satan; power to bind, to command, and to cast out the demons. The name represents legal authority. The whole work of redemption has a legal significance. It is

in accord with the law of absolute righteousness and truth that Satan has been conquered. Indeed, all righteousness, law and order *required* that he should be utterly abolished and cast out forever. By the cross of Calvary he has been so judged and legally conquered. The "word of the cross," the voice and melody of love to our hearts, must forever thunder in Satan's ears as the awful cry of inexorable righteousness against him, the voice of victory over him, —Heaven's final and awful declaration of his doom.

This too, is the prayer that availeth much in its working, to heal the sick. "Why look ye on us as though by our own power . . . His name has made this man strong;" were the words of Peter to those who witnessed the miracle of healing. This prayer too, is potent to nourish the inner life, unite the hearts of believers and keep them in the love of God. "In His name" is

A Tower of Refuge.

"The righteous runneth into it and is *safe*." Where there is righteousness,

there is safety. "What better breastplate than a heart untainted!" We have read of a man, who facing danger at the hands of a foreign foe, covered himself with his country's flag. He thus ran for refuge into the name of his nation.

"In His name" means identity of position; "with Christ in the heavenlies." It means that we were crucified, quickened, raised, and are seated together with Him. Called by His name, means clothed with the garments of His righteousness, adorned with His grace, and hence accepted and at home before the Father in love. Bearing the name tells that we have left the domain of the enemy of the name and are ensphered in it as in a strong tower. In that name we are sons, delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His Love. Thanks be to God!

Prayer is a war measure. The forces against us are most subtle and tremendous, —the very powers of darkness. It is dangerous to pray in ourselves; but prayer in His name is absolutely safe. And it not only preserves the heart and life but is the final weapon by which the enemy is utterly

defeated. Further, it is

A Tower of Vision.

In the olden time the watchmen and prophets resorted to the tower. Thence approaching danger was detected and evil averted. And thence the seer penetrated the invisible, caught the vision and will of God for the people and prayed it into realization. The prophet, as well as the priest was a man of prayer. (*See Gen. 20:7.*) Moses, Daniel, Elijah and others, prayed because they saw. God's word to Jeremiah, "Call unto Me and I will answer thee and show thee hidden things," is to us also. Calling and seeing are still closely related, and the range of vision determines the reach of prayer.

Stephen, the Spirit-filled man, under a shower of stones, kneels down, and looking up, calls upon God, and sees Heaven opened and the glory of God, and Jesus standing ready to receive his transfigured spirit. And so spiritual vision must ever precede and accompany true prayer. Anna who served God by prayer and fasting, night and day in the temple, needs no guid-

ing star, or band of angels to tell her that Jesus is the Christ. The spiritual intuitions of a praying heart need no external signs. Oh, the visions of the glory of God, of the loveliness of Christ, and of His great plans for His people; which await those who abide in the life and exercise of this prayer-tower! It is also,

An Interlocking Tower.

Shortly after the construction of an electric car line, the writer, while crossing one day to San Francisco, on looking out of the window, was struck with the words, "Interlocking Tower," boldly written on the side of a building which stood near the track. Sometime later we visited the tower and were greatly interested in seeing some fifty great iron levers, three or four different kinds of them; some signal, some switching and some interlocking. The first indicated to the approaching train that the way was clear, the second determined its direction, the third secured its safety by locking the way against any train following within a certain time. The safety of many thousands of lives every day depended on the skill and faithfulness of the lone man in

the tower who manipulated those levers.

And we thought, how like the man in the solitary place of prayer! If he is a faithful watchman, faithful in "the listening side of prayer," to hear the word and to sound out the signal, if he is skilled in useing the lever which "moves the hand that moves the world," faithful in claiming and holding the answer to lock lives in with the will of God and lock out the enemy who is ever seeking their destruction; such an one is giving direction to and securing the safety of lives unnumbered; and his place of prayer is truly an "interlocking tower."

A Tower of Fellowship.

Here, we never pray alone. Often externally alone, as within our closet we pray to our Father. Praying "in His name," we pray in His nature, which is love, and love is never alone. The deepest, sweetest, holiest heart-fellowships in all the universe are enclosed and preserved forevermore within this temple of prayer,—"In My name." Here spirits blend, and "friend holds fellowship with friend."

CHAPTER 6.

Christ's Great Prayer

I pray for them, . . . for they are Thine. —*John 17:9*.

SO the seventeenth chapter of John has been appropriately designated. They tell us that we do not know a truth, until we know it in its relations. Of Scripture truth where the relation is vital and organic, this must be especially so. Hence, in order to a worthy estimate of its true greatness, we need to view this prayer in its appropriate setting.

First, as related to the

GOSPEL IN WHICH IT IS RECORDED.

In the development of doctrine in this fourth Gospel narrative, some have observed an analogy to the ancient tabernacle or temple, to which indeed, there seems to be an allusion in the opening chapter, where, in speaking of Christ, it is said, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us."

We remember the great compartments of the tabernacle, the outer court with its altar of sacrifice and cleansing laver. Then inside the door the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick, and just before the veil, the altar of incense, and last, the holiest of all with its sacred contents. Corresponding to this, in the first chapter of John, we see Jesus as the great Sin-bearer, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," while the cleansing of the temple in the second chapter reminds us of the ancient laver. In a word, we have, up to chapter five, salvation, in its earlier stages, which seems to correspond with the spiritual meaning of the outer court. In chapter six we see Jesus as the Living Bread, and later on as the Light of the World, while in the last discourse and the supper, there is the true communion of which we see a type in the second compartment of the tabernacle. While chapter seventeen, reminds us of the altar of incense, the ancient type of prayer. Here we see the Great High Priest just before the veil. We are surely treading on holy ground. Oh, that we might have beheld Him as He lifted up His

eyes, and said, "Father;" that we might have heard the accents of His voice as He prayed for the entire Church.

It is important too that we study the prayer in the light of the last discourse to which it is so closely related. See, for instance, how the idea of unity pervades them both. The discourse leads up to the prayer, while the prayer seals the discourse and appeals to the Father for the fulfillment of its great truths in the hearts of the disciples.

Second, we may view the prayer as

RELATED TO ITS GREAT AUTHOR

and offerer; the Lord Jesus. Through the prayer we need to take time to "behold the Man." Greater than our need of knowing what He prayed is that of knowing Him as the praying One. While the Word sometimes gives us the contents of His prayer, it far more often presents Him as praying and as having prayed. While on earth He was the Man of prayer. With Him prayer was a necessity. But we must not regard His praying as only an expression of His human

nature. It has a deeper and diviner origin. Its opening and frequently repeated, "Father," is more than an expression of His holy humanity. Everywhere in this Gospel He is presented as the Son of God. (*See chapter 20:31.*) Here also, it is the Eternal Son Who prays. His praying is the exercise of His Divine prerogative as the Son of God. And as we thus see the Divine and heavenly nature of prayer, what a mystery it is,—how we feel our need of being taught by the Spirit that which the natural man can never know, but which the Spirit reveals to the hidden man of the heart; and which He longs to reveal to the humblest child of God who seeks to know and to exercise it for His glory!

To the Father's "ask of Me," in the second Psalm, we have the Son's response in the seventeenth of John. In this prayer no element is lacking. What deep devotion and worship it breathes throughout! What perfect love and faithfulness to the Father and to the disciples! What an expression and revelation of the

How highly favored the little group of eye and ear witnesses who beheld Him pray! Yet, less favored, at that hour, than we, if we really believe His word, "It is expedient for you that I go away." In the Spirit we are nearer to Him than they were on that night, nearer than even John who leaned upon His breast. On the day of Pentecost, His Spirit, Who that night was with them came to indwell and take possession of them. "At that day" He and they became one, and the answer to His prayer properly began to be realized. This brings us to consider, third, the prayer as

Related to His Disciples,

first, as a prayer *for* them, and second, as *their* prayer.

This is supremely Christ's prayer for His disciples. Notice how its thirteen petitions, falling as they do into three groups, are all concerned with the will and purpose of the Father respecting Christ and the Church. He had not yet reached the full glory of His Christhood, hence, His first petitions

are for this so that the Father may be glorified. With Him, the Father's glory is ever in the foreground. Next, He prays for those who were then His disciples, and third, for all who were yet to believe on Him through their word. How wonderful! On that night He remembered us and all who were ever to be included in His mystical Body, the Church. And yet, it is just this that we should expect, for this is the intercessory prayer of our Great High Priest; and not only the prayer of that hour, but the

TEXT OF HIS PRAYER FOR THE AGE.

This Prayer, as it relates to His Body, the Church, is in the present tense. How important then, that we note its every petition.

See how He prays for their sanctification in the power of the truth, and for their preservation from all evil, and especially for their unity. Five times we have the expression, "that they all may be one," —a unity so like that of the Trinity, a unity so manifest that the world can see and believe. Alas, that the importance of

this unity of the body is so dimly seen by many believers and practically denied by others.

And last, we observe, that here is not only His prayer for us, but

ALSO OUR PRAYER.

This is implied in the "all may be one" of the prayer and the "with Me where I am;" viz., the place which He prepared and which they spiritually entered on the day of Pentecost. "That day" (when the Holy Spirit came,) marked a new epoch in prayer. Since then the Lord Jesus prays, not only yonder, at the Father's right hand, but as the Head of the body He prays here, through the one Spirit,

IN HIS MEMBERS.

See how this is evidenced in the prayers of Paul. How he prays to the Father for "all the saints" that they may be "sanctified wholly," that their hearts may be comforted "being knit together in love," that they may be "preserved blameless," etc. In a word, Paul's praying is the echo of John seventeen. In the Spirit, Paul prays on the earth what the Lord Jesus is praying

in the glory. Their prayer-life and ministry have become one. Thus the Lord Jesus prays in Paul, and thus Paul prays in Jesus' name. With him, prayer was no mere form, but a mighty, spiritual force, a means of supply of the Spirit and life of Christ to all saints; and conflict with the powers of darkness. He was often in an agony of prayer. This was also true of Epaphras and of other co-workers, and will be true of all who follow them as they followed Christ. This was the mightiest ministry of the early Church. And the greatest need of the present hour is not more men or money or better methods, necessary as all these may be, but that we be awakened to see the nature and possibilities of prayer. There is a

CALL FOR A NEW CRUSADE;

a Crusade in Christendom, to rescue, not the tomb of Christ from His enemies; but His Body, the Church, from the low mental conceptions and enfeebled spiritual state into which it has fallen; to resurrect it from the rubbish of ritualism, formalism, self and time-serving, false doctrines, etc., by

which it has become, in some parts, well-nigh entombed. Let us also be encouraged that a better day is dawning.

May we, by His grace, be made to feel more keenly and to confess, the sickly state of much of our past praying, and, not trying to rise therefrom by a process of self-efforts simply, but accepting

CHRIST, HIMSELF AS OUR PRAYER-LIFE

and consenting to live in momentary dependence upon Him, He will become our strength and health, and make prayer as "simple and natural as breathing or working to a healthy man." Who of us will hear and respond to the Spirit's call?

CHAPTER 7.

Paul's Great Prayer, or The Prisoner on his Knees

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. —*Eph. 3:14-21.*

THE prisoner was the Apostle Paul, and the prayer was his. He had a revelation. And so must all who would pray as he prayed. The mystery which was "hid in God" had been shown to him. It was the Church, in which believers, without national or other distinctions are one, and form one body in Christ, and this, he saw to be the temple or dwelling-place for God.

in the Spirit. (*Eph. 2:20 22.*) "For this cause," (*Eph. 3:6.*) he was about to pour out his soul in worship and prayer;—but a further word of explanation was needed.

This leads to the digression of chapter 3:1-13. In this connection he twice speaks of his imprisonment; (something he never does in any other letter,) then, repeating the words, "For this cause," he bows his knees, and in prayer, brings to a close the doctrinal part of his wonderful letter in one of the grandest climaxes ever uttered.

But what had the imprisonment to do with the prayer? Much every way. That Roman prison was the result of his being imprisoned in the embrace of God's will. It was the evidence of his being out of joint with the world and its spirit, because of his harmony with Heaven. And it was to this latter he owed his power to pray.

"The life of St. Paul as it stands before us in his letters, . . . was one of constant struggle against difficult circumstances. He was always suspected, always misunderstood by someone." His prison was no self-chosen monastery, but was the small corner afforded him by the world

which drove his Lord to the cross, and, so far as it was concerned, for the same reason.

Now it was this love to Christ and loyalty to principle which made him the great soul that he was; and this, in turn, made his prayer possible. The prayer is a product of the man; inspired, it is true, but inspired because his life was in harmony with its great principles. He could have chosen an easier way, but then, he never could have breathed into form this living prayer.

BACK OF THE PRAYER WAS THE PERSONALITY

in Christ, and this was fused and formed in the furnaces through which he passed. One finds out how small he is, by an honest effort to fit himself into the great framework of Paul's prayers.

He paid for his prayers what he paid for his character, and the price was tremendous. But their worth infinitely outweighs *that* cost, for their original price takes us back to Calvary. His prayers afforded him not only a field of service, but a present reward for all his sufferings.

While the Apostle Paul was no monk, yet he was a mystic in the truest sense. To him, the invisible was wonderfully real, and he found that submission to bonds, and a small place on earth, gave him a large place and

GREAT LIBERTY IN THE HEAVENLIES.

And this was his prayer-sanctuary where he consciously lived and moved as in his true sphere. In this sphere, *in Christ*, he found others and their needs, and there he prayed.

May we, in the spirit of humble inquiry consider some particulars of the prayer.

It is *offered to the Father*. (*Verse 14.*) In verse 11, he had spoken of the "boldness and access, with *confidence*, by the faith of Him." Jesus "died that He might bring us to God." Here, we see this realized; Paul is so identified with the "Son of His love," so partakes of the very life and nature of his adorable Lord, as to find himself before the Father, in Christ's own immediateness, confidence, and consciousness of the Father's love. In this, the Son's

nature, nearness, and knowledge of the Father, the apostle is

BEFORE THE FATHER IN PRAYER!

"*That*." (*Verse 16.*) The word means "*so that*," "in order that." And what a flood of light this single word lets into the entire prayer! The Apostle prayed, not to cause the Father to become *willing* to bless, but just the opposite of this. Because of the Infinite Fatherliness of God, *His great* longing to pour forth, "according to the riches of His glory,"—here is the measure, —"He *may* give you" (Roth. Trans.) the fulness of His own love and Spirit. How the Father longs to give to His every child of the fulness of His Father-love! But in order that He "may" do so, there must be the means, the channel, through which it can be expressed.

THAT MEANS AND CHANNEL IS PRAYER.

"For this cause," that the Father *may* fill this glorious temple, the Body of His Beloved Son, with all the wealth of His Spirit,—"for this cause, Paul, as a living member of this Body prays.

And how marvelous the significance which is thus seen to attach to prayer. It means that God is permitted, out of the pent-up fulness of His love, to give Himself to His own, in a continuous giving. It means that the true intercessor is a "joint of supply" between the fathomless fountain of "all grace," and the needs of "all saints." "Praying in the Holy Ghost" means keeping ourselves in the living, active stream of the "love of God," and thus being so supplied and supplying that the whole body of Christ is built up thereby! (*Jude 20;21.*) No wonder that those who best knew its meaning should say, "We will continue steadfastly in prayer." (*Acts 6:4.*)

"*That the inward man may be strengthened.*" (*Verse 16.*) The inward man is the new man, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He partakes of the life of Christ, but is not Christ. He is a distinctive personality, a child of God.

"*That Christ may dwell,*" (*Verse 17.*) "make His home," in your heart by faith. Two things seem clear here; first that the Apostle prays that they may have an ex-

perience which he already has; and second, an experience which is not yet theirs. Now they were already saved, and had received the Holy Spirit. (*Chapter 1:13.*) So that the indwelling of Christ, in this connection, is something beyond these. So other Scriptures seem clearly to teach, e.g. John 14;23, Rom. 8;9,10, Gal. 4;19.

As love can only be satisfied in giving and doing its best, the Father must long to give to His child, "the inward man," His best, even the "Son of His love;" not as He gave Him to the world, a Sin-offering, to be crucified; but to His own child to be received, enthroned, and to have a home in the heart. (*1st. Pet. 3;15, R. V.*) It is equally the desire of the Spirit, Whose office it is to glorify the Son and the Father, that this be realized; and so of the Son Who ever acquiesces in all the Father's will.

Now the new man has the capacity for thus receiving the adorable Son, but, to do so, he must be supernaturally strengthened, all his powers and perceptions quickened so

Oh, wondrous grace! That the Only Begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, should also be embosomed in the heart of His child! And thus it is. It is the province of the Father's love to thus, personally, definitely, and yet perpetually, give His Beloved Son; and of the Holy Spirit to ever bring Him nigh, "manifest," and so "glorify" Him; and of the new man to so receive Him. (*Rev. 3:20.*) Oh, that we, His children, might wait in holy wonder and worship asking for a clearer knowledge of what it means! That more really than yonder sun is embosomed in the dew-drop, the inner man may receive and know, the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ!

"*By faith.*" This is emphatic; it is *the* faith, implying something more than faith in its first stages;—the fulness of faith, a faith of the affections and the will which positively confides in the Father's love to thus give, and in the Son to so come to abide; a faith which consciously rests in this actual possession.

That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be full mighty to grasp firmly conjointly with ALL *the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to get to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ.—Verse 18.* (*Roth. Trans.*) Here is part of the result of this indwelling of Christ. Doubtless the image of the Church, as the temple of God, is still before the apostle's mind. Individual souls, are the "living stones" of which it is being built. But each one is also a complete temple in itself, a miniature of the great whole. Now these parts must become mutually related and adjusted to the whole and they must be so held by bonds of living cement, as to preserve the symmetry and beauty of the building.

He may also have in mind the "one body and one Spirit" of the following chapter, growing up in all things into Christ, its living Head. This presents its unity as essential, not only to its *form*, but also to its very *life* and *growth*. While all its life-nourishment inheres in the Head; it is "*fitly framed and knit together by that which* EVERY JOINT *sup-*

plieth." Now this living temple must be "rooted," implying its vitality and growth; and also "grounded," its solidarity. And the rooting and grounding are both "in love,"—Christ-love. This is the soil in which it grows, or if we think of the building; that on which it rests, and the cement by which it holds together. A unity in love! Yet not simply the mutual love of individuals; but the great all-inclusive

LOVE OF THE CHRIST,—

a love which, centering in His own personality, extends to, penetrates, fills and embraces the entire body in all its parts. Now to hold with Him, to intelligently will (for love implies this,) and acquiesce in the action of His love which thus unites, we need to become conscious of that love; that is, conscious in His consciousness of His love. We need to be lifted from the mere individual grasp of it, into its collective consciousness, its Church-fulness, so to speak. We need to know that in it which is beyond us, that which "passeth knowledge," and yet which we need to know, "to the end that . . . we may be strong to

"grasp firmly, with all the saints." We need to be awakened into its living grasp. and know it, not only as it holds *us*, but in its hold of *others*, even His entire body, the Church.

Thus, "with all saints" we may know its "length and breadth, its depth and height," even the magnitude of His body, the Church. And to know this, is to know and to pray in His prayer, His love in action, the wonderful intercession of John seventeen. Exactly this is what we see in this prayer of Ephesians three. It is not only the echo of that prayer, but it is that prayer breathing forth from the Great High Priest, in all its vitalizing, uniting, and sanctifying power, through this member of His body, the Church.

CHAPTER 8.

Prayer and the Promise of the Father . . .

"Oh my glorified Lord, let Thy Spirit of glory become my life. Let His Presence break down all trust in self, and make room for Thee. Teach me, not only to take and hold these blessed truths in my mind, but with my spirit to wait on Thee to be filled with Thy Spirit."

THE Bible is a book of promises. History, precept and prophecy are interspersed with them. In the Old Testament and in the New, they can be counted by the thousand. Nor does the greatness of the number depreciate the value of a single one. They are all "exceeding great and precious promises."

Among the many, however, are

Two Great Promises.

The first of these is found in Genesis three. It is God's promise to fallen Adam. Like a thread of scarlet and gold, for it is constantly connected with suffering and glory,

it runs through the entire Old Testament, and there it ends. It is all-inclusive of blessing to the individual, the nation, the world. This, it need scarcely be stated, is the promise of the Infinite love of God, to give His Son, to be the Messiah of Israel and Redeemer of the world. In the New Testament we have its glorious fulfillment.

The second great promise of the Bible is that of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. In the Old Testament this promise appears in symbol, type and prophecy, and in direct statement. Unlike the first it is carried over into the New Testament, and in its full and final statement is found in the Gospel by John, and there, in His last discourse, it is reiterated again and again by our Lord Himself. He speaks of it as still future. Although He was with them, the promise was still unfulfilled. And it was unfulfilled to them because only in part fulfilled to Him.

The promise of the Son was to the world. The promise of the Spirit was not even to the Church, directly, but to the Son. The Father is the Promiser. The

Spirit is the Promised One; and the Son, the Promisee,—the One to Whom the promise is made.

At His baptism the voice was heard "This is My Beloved Son," and there the Holy Spirit came upon Him to abide. While the Spirit was in and with Him from the beginning, yet, from this time He was *filled* with the Spirit for His great public ministry and sacrifice. This was a great gift for a great object, but is not spoken of as the fulfillment of the *promise of the Father*. No doubt this was a part, the beginning of the fulfillment, (we might say,) of the promise. It was a reward for the years of silent, patient service in the carpenter shop and at the same time a preparation for a far greater service, temptations and Infinite sacrifice—the cross, itself. (*Heb. 9:14.*) These having been all fulfilled, every testing met and overcome and the mighty work and works "finished," the way is prepared for a still greater reward, and this received, prepares in turn. for a still more august and glorious ministry Not a greater ministry in the sense that it is to eclipse Calvary; but as a fruit thereof

and manifestation of the glory contained therein. When then was this Promise of the Father to the Son fulfilled? Referring to Acts 2;33, we see that it was when "God raised Him up," and He, "being by the right hand of God exalted," "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit."

We see this again in Hebrews, chapter one,—"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Reverently let us seek to know what this means as a

REWARD FOR HIS FAITHFUL SERVICE

and suffering. And is not this implied in the "therefore" of Hebrews one? "Because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity," as forever proven to an intelligent universe, by His life and death on earth, "He is anointed." In this, His prayer, (*John 17.*) "Glorify Thou Me," is answered. When the cross was before Him, He looked beyond and through it to a joy and glory so great as to enable Him to "despise" the shame, and "endure" the suffering of the cross. That "joy" is realized in this "oil

of gladness" and all that this implies in connection with the heavenly fellowship, the Church, and the glories of the Kingdom. What a reward!

We see also, that it was a

PREPARATION FOR HEAVENLY MINISTRY.

The priest of the Old Testament was anointed for his ministry in the tabernacle. This typified Christ, Who, as our Priest, is entered into Heaven, itself, and is the "Minister of the Sanctuary . . . which the Lord pitched." (*Heb. 8;2.*) What a sanctuary! What a ministry! Well may we "consider Him!" Think of His blood-sprinkling wherewith He sanctifies the people. (*Heb. 13;12.*)

HIS CEASELESS INTERCESSION

through which we are saved "to the uttermost;" (*Heb. 7;25.*) His preparing places for His own; (*John 14;2.*) His presenting us evermore in His own Person before the Father; (*Heb. 9;24.*) His worship! (*Heb. 13;15.*) All this august ministry which so transcends our finite minds, is in the power of the Eternal Spirit!

A Bestowment for Dispensation.

(See Acts 2;33, Heb. 1:9, and John 7:38,39.) The Spirit, as received at His baptism, was for His public and personal ministry. Never until after the resurrection do we read of His imparting the Spirit to His disciples. It is the risen Lord Who breathes on them and says, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Was not this an introduction to the new relationship they were to sustain to Him and their consequent participation in His own Spirit; an object-lesson for the age, showing what would be continued in fulness and power when once He was glorified. From Acts 2;33 it is clear that His receiving the Spirit and pouring forth of the Spirit upon His disciples are immediately connected. And when we remember that He ascended, not as an individual, but as the Last Adam,—Federal Head of the new race, and Head of the Church which is His Body, it becomes clear that the effusion on Pentecost was the disciples' fellowship with the Lord Jesus in receiving the promise of the Father.

Psalm 133, seems to present a beautiful

prophetic picture of this great New Testament reality; the anointing oil, first upon the Priest's head, then descending to the skirts of His garments. It is also likened to the falling of the dew. Thus the Holy Spirit is given. How blessed! No earnestness, effort, or prayer on our part, could ever secure to us this gift. Nothing less than the obedience unto death, and perfect faith of the Lord Jesus, could receive for Himself, and for us, this wonderful promise of the Father. His name be praised! He hath received, and is now bestowing upon every member truly surrendered to, and united with Him, the blessed Comforter.

Quietly as the descending oil, the falling dew, or His breathing upon His disciples, our Lord imparts to the trusting heart, His Holy Spirit! He is anointed . . to give the "the oil of gladness." (*Isa.61;3.*)

As the

EXPRESSION OF THE FATHER'S LOVE.

Reverently we would enquire if we may even touch the fringe of what this means. And yet, oh wondrous grace, this very love is what we are permitted and called to

share! He prays that the "love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them." The Holy Spirit is the Father's gift, the expression of the Father's love to the Son! Oh, for a new appreciation of this wondrous gift! What rare costliness, sacredness, fineness, fragrance and beauty is expressed and suggested by the Old Testament symbols and types of the Holy Spirit,—the adorable Person in Whom is the reciprocal, ever-present, ever-active, eternal love of Father and Son! And this is the gift of Eternal Love to us, to abide in us forever! Oh, that we might be forever hushed into worship and holy wonder in the presence of such a mystery! !

"Fountain of love! Thyself true God!
Who through eternal days
From Father and from Son hast flowed
In uncreated ways!

Oh, Majesty unspeakable!
Oh, Person, all Divine!
How in the three-fold Majesty
Doth Thy Procession shine!

Proceeding, yet of equal age
With those Whose love Thou art—
Proceeding, yet distinct from Those
From Whom Thou seem'st to part.

Thou art a Sea without a shore;
Awful, immense, Thou art,—
A Sea which can contract itself
Within my narrow heart.

Oh, Spirit beautiful and dread,
My heart is fit to break,
With love of all Thy tenderness,
For us poor sinners' sake."

OUR ATTITUDE.

Surely it ought to be nothing less than that of absolute surrender and unwavering, unbounded faith. Oh, how we have limited, grieved and dishonored this Blessed One by our questioning and doubting. May it soon cease to be so. May we take time and pains to be silent unto Him. He is in His temple,—your heart and mine, oh, child of God, just now. Be still! And soon we shall know His great and sacred

Presence in our life,

His Inspiring In Prayer and Praise,

His quiet and constant guiding, His light in our minds, His love-fire in our hearts, His revealing of the Father and the Son, and His communication to our poor broken lives; silent, ceaseless and sweet as the light of the sun; all the riches of the grace of God.

The Inner Circle Of Prayer . .

We will give ourselves continually to Prayer. *Acts 6;4.*

WHAT is it? Not the ordinary prayer-meeting, nor simply a meeting, large or small, for prayer. We must have meetings for prayer, whether the number present be two or twenty; but we need also to know the prayer-circle, and continue therein, in the absence of any meeting.

If we think of the Church as moving on an ascending scale, the inner circle is also the higher circle. In general, we may say, it is that portion of the Body of Christ which is most closely

IDENTIFIED WITH ITS LORD

in actual experience, and especially in intercession.

The idea of an inner circle is not new. We find it wherever we find the work of

the Lord. Had there been any considerable number of believers in the anti-deluvian days; men like Enoch and Noah, who "walked with God," would have formed the inner circle.

Later, during the age of promise, we find it in Abraham and "his trained servants, born in his own house." (*Gen. 14:4.*) And the inner circle of that household, perhaps, was Abraham and his son Isaac, and they on Mount Moriah, where the dearest treasure and fondest ties are yielded up to death. It is always the

PLACE OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

and a place which can only be reached and held by self-sacrificing. Lot was a member before he "chose him all the plain of the Jordan." But, poor man, though still in a sense "righteous Lot," he fell to a lower and outer circle, when he made that choice; while the great, generous spirit of Abraham goes on to higher levels, clearer visions, greater promises from God. Lot's choice may have appeared to him, (for sefishness is necessarily short-sighted,) not only as bringing immediate gain, but also, as being

more safe and sane. He might have seen in it superior advantages for his family, a larger social life, an opportunity for greater influence upon the masses in those "cities of the plain." But then, as now, it soon appeared that power over the masses is not gained in this way; and soon his own life is imperiled and himself a helpless captive. Just here, however, is a new occasion for the faith and faithfulness of the inner circle, Abraham and his four-hundred. By these Lot is delivered. Nor has this order changed. Deliverance still comes through the people who pray.

Later, when we see Lot in a still sorrier plight; his honor insulted, his influence useless, his wife a pillar of salt, and his possessions consumed in the flames; his own life is spared because "God remembered Abraham." Then, as now, "the

MAN OF PRAYER IS THE MAN OF POWER."

In the days of Moses, the fact and force of the inner circle is still more marked. It is seen in the very setting of the camp and the arrangement and services of the tabernacle. Here too, we see that

faithfulness to God, in the face of opposition and at any cost, is the price of this place of privilege and power. It falls to the lot of one tribe, while it is forfeited by eleven others, not through any arbitrary act of God; but in consequence of loyalty to Him. On that awful crisis day when Moses stood alone and called for decision as to who was on the Lord's side, the Levites took the stand, "played the man" and so purged the camp from idolatry; hence their place of priestly power. (*See Ex. 32; 26-29. Mal. 2;4-6.*) But perhaps Moses, saving the nation through a forty day's intercession, is the highest example of the

Power of Close Fellowship with God.

We have further examples of this power in the days of the Judges; very epecially in Gideon and his three hundred. Through this little band, tested and "sifted for service" God brings a glorious deliverance to the nation. What thirty thousand could not do is easily accomplished by three hundred men who are "meet for the Master's use." They are selected because they are suited, and prove themselves so by con-

duct in little things. The manner in which they drank a few sips of water was a small matter; but, as "a straw shows how the wind blows" it revealed their true character and fitness for the field of battle. It is so still. The little things in every-day life are often the indices to our progress in the power of prayer or our forfeiture thereof.

Oh God wants, and we need, the clean life, the single eye, the forward and upward look of true soldiers of the cross, if we will gain and hold the plane of prayer which the needs of the hour demand. We must hold loosely the temporalities of life if we would grasp firmly the sword of the Spirit and the principles of prayer. Perhaps yon crowd who could take time to get down on all fours for a drink of water were too dull and easy-going for the valor and fine tactics of Gideon's band? It is the nimble footed sheperd boy and "sweet-singer" with sling in hand, whom the Lord uses to defeat the foe who defied the armies of Israel. Even so to-day, there is a call for men of heart, nerve and brain, literal and moral,

as instruments of prayer. Men, at least, who know how to "keep the body under" and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." Some may shrink from thus closely relating the spiritual and material; but the fact remains that they are closely related and constantly acting and re-acting upon each other. While our physical life and habits mean much for, or against prayer; there is something far finer and more difficult of discernment. It is the sphere of the soul with all its faculties and powers, habits of thought, suggestions etc., by us, and upon us. For this, we need especially the Spirit and the Word. (*Heb. 4:2.*)

In David and his mighty men and Daniel and his friends, we might see further illustrations, but this will suffice.

Turning now to our text, we find in the Church, the inner circle of prayer. The above instances serve us as object-lessons. They illustrate the great principles of prayer and the inner circle. But we must ever remember that Pentecost

brought something entirely new. It began the formation of Christ's Body, the Church. This lifted prayer to a new level and meaning. Believers are now the vital members of Christ. Baptized into Him, they share His life, Spirit, and ministry. His branches, they are to show forth the excellence of Him, the hidden Vine. Christ and His Church form one, glorious, organic whole. (*See 1st. Cor. 12;12.*)

This unity of the Body, however, may seem to preclude the idea of the inner circle; but not so when viewed in the *full* light of New Testament truth. For while members one of another, there is still, within the limits of God's will, individual liberty and variety. This is seen in the "We will *give* ourselves," of the text. Here is free, personal choice, in the Holy Spirit. Members of Him, but not all equally subject to His sweet and holy will. His branches, but not all abiding in the same full measure. Not all run so earnestly, serve so faithfully, or share so heartily the "sufferings of Christ;" and, "if we suffer, we shall also *reign* with Him." And as the degree of fellowship

differs here, so the rewards will differ hereafter. In the physical body, the hand and eye, so necessary to service, are less vital than the interior organs, with their quiet, hidden functions of life.

Ah, yes, there is an inner circle of prayer, and the loving, loyal heart will find it; through the door of the cross, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Its Ministry.

In thinking of that early Church, with its fulness of life, its marvelous love, its unity and community, its onward march of evangelism, its miracles and mighty triumphs over the world, the flesh, and the devil, its forward and upward look for the coming of the King; we naturally ask for the secret of such power. And the answer is embodied in the one brief clause, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer." All its power centers in this inner circle. This is its point of contact with the invisible Person, the Holy Spirit, and therefore the mainspring of all its mighty movements.

The praying members were the life-imparting, love-dispensing, Spirit-supply-

ing joints in the Body.

The prayer-circle preserved the unity, promoted the growth, impelled and directed the ministries, swayed the sceptre, and held the key to every situation.

May the day be hastened when the Church will again find its pivot of power in the "We will give ourselves continually to prayer."

The Changed Priesthood

The priesthood being changed.—*Heb. 7:12.*
We have such a High Priest. —*Heb. 8:1.*
Ye are a royal priesthood. —*1st. Pet. 2:9.*

THE *felt need.* Long before the appointment of Aaron it was expressed. It originated in the Garden of Eden. There, sin severed the bond of union with God. It created the awful chasm by cutting off man's life-supply and landing him in spiritual darkness and death; and yet conscious of his unspeakable loss and unfitness for fellowship with God. Long before Israel as a nation existed, and outside of the nation, this need was felt and seen. Far out as the bounds of the human race, in tribes where the true God is all unknown, it is easily traced in the forms of false religion.

The unuttered heart-cry of untold millions is voiced in the words of the ancient Job, "How shall a man be just with God, . . . for He is not a man as I

am that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment? Neither is there a daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both." Praise God, the chasm is bridged;

THE DAYSMAN HAS COME,

and has laid His hand upon us both, for in His own adorable Person, He unites God and man.

But before His coming great preparations were needed. Man became too darkened to know Him, or even to know his own need. And so, for fifteen hundred years we see the elaborate Mosaic system of sacrifices and priests, God's great object-lesson, setting forth this mighty need and God's great supply. In all this, we see just one thing;—Calvary; and

ONE PERSON;—JESUS,

and all Spirit-born believers a royal priesthood with Him.

The priest was the go-between. He was "taken from among men, . . for men, in things pertaining to God." (*Heb. 5:1.*) To be a priest, he must possess a priestly

character, he must be human so as to sympathize with human weakness and human needs. And he must also be holy and righteous if he is to have access to God and fellowship with His holy character and will. In Aaron and his sons, even the human side was marred and imperfect, mingled, as it was with self and sin; while the Divine was utterly absent. Yet it served for that day of types and shadows.

What he lacked in character, to fit him to appear before God, was typically seen in his bodily perfection, and supplied in his priestly attire. "The coat, the girdle, the robe, the ephod, the breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim, the mitre, the holy crown,—all told out the varied virtues, qualifications of the one who was to represent the congregation and maintain the interests thereof in the Divine Presence."

Then as to ministry, except as a type, it was equally imperfect; subject as it was to isolated acts, times, repetition, change from one to another by death, not to speak of its imperfect knowledge of both God and man. As a type, however, of the wonderful sacrifice of Calvary, it fulfilled the

Divine purpose. But of His *Heavenly* Priesthood it did not even serve this end.

Hence the other type. It is represented by the mysterious name and personage,—Melchizedec. The whole Old Testament records his name but twice, (*Gen. 14; 18, Psalm 110;4.*) and one appearance, and one act,—that is all. But the very omissions and silence concerning him are most eloquent utterances. They tell us that there is a Priesthood which is invisible and spiritual, having no human pedigree, but is "without beginning of days or end of life." One which is limited to no tribe or race, but is, in the broadest sense, representative of man, and of "the Most High God of Heaven and earth;" one which, according to His Name, is absolutely righteous and royal. In permanency and power it bears the stamp of eternity. In perfection it is Divine. Its ministry is faultless, characterized by perfect knowledge, perfect sympathy and perfect ability.

Think of the blunders of merely human priests because of ignorance, both as to the nature of God and the needs of man. Had Aaron truly known God he could never

have consented to the golden calf as a substitute. And think of the sins, personal needs, and heart-aches of the great nation of which he could know nothing and perhaps care but little, if he did know.

But, glory be to God, the priesthood *is changed*. The Son, in His heavenly glory is the Priest. His knowledge is perfect. He knows the nature, ways and will of God, because He is God. He therefore knows how to worship, intercede and praise and how to offer our prayers and praises, poor as they may be. While on earth, He was heard for His godly fear. He

KNOWS US BECAUSE HE BEARS OUR NATURE.

and He knows our every need and name. He knows just how many there are of us, and every prayer we utter. He knows how to give His undivided attention to each one and to each particular need, though there be ten thousand appealing for His succor at the same moment. Yes, praise God, our Priest understands.

And His sympathy is equal to His knowledge. We have a Priest Who can be *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities.

"He careth!"

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST!!

Only the life of the Man of Sorrows, with its trials and tears, its sobs and prayers and awful passion can tell us what it means.

"Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye."

Furthermore, He is equally able to perform. Creator and Upholder of all things, crowned with honor and glory at the right hand of the Majesty on High, abiding in the power of an endless life; His ministry never even weakens for a single moment. This is now the Priesthood which constitutes the

MEDIUM OF DIVINE UNION.

This answers to the breach and separation made by sin. To accomplish this, the Son of God took upon Himself the "likeness of sinful flesh." He became man. Yet even the incarnation did not complete the union. Jesus, when on earth, was alone; there were none like Him. He

was not simply a man among men. He was *the* Man, the last Adam, the Head of the new race. Until after His death He was the "corn of wheat," which, except it die, must abide alone. But, blessed be His name, He died, and in that death, carried our sins and ourselves to the cross, buried both in His grave, and left them there forever. The cross is the end of the fallen Adamic nature and race before God. In Christ, it is neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new creation, where Christ is all.

It is through the sacrifice of all unto death that the union with God is formed and eternally maintained. Sin is just the opposite of this. It is self-assertion, self-will. It therefore separates from God. Herein is the glory of the cross, the expression of absolute surrender to God. While it means more than this, yet this is the great principle which underlies all. It therefore cancelled sin and reconciled us to God. But let us remember that all this law of love and sacrifice, did before His death; and still doth, inhere in the Person of our glorious High Priest.

Further, it is the

Channel of Divine Supply.

Priesthood says not only that God must *have* all, but that He must *bestow* all. Sin makes man feel that he is self-sufficient; salvation, that he is utterly dependent. Through Christ crucified, the love of God finds its adequate expression and outlet to the lost. The Father's love is not only to the Son, but through Him to the Church. God's giving, ceaseless as the sunlight, is all through the Person and Priestly action of the Beloved Son, in Whom the union of God and man is complete, living, and eternal. But the union of Christ and His Body, the Church, is equally real. Therefore God, and every member of the Church meet every moment in the Person of Christ. And the whole law of Divine love between the Father and the Church; its giving and receiving; its mutual and endless exchange and response; its influx and outflow; are all through the Priestly intercession of Christ and His Church. In His adorable Person, the Father and the Church are forever meeting. All the petitions of the

High Priestly prayer, (*John 17.*) are also statements of what His praying, every moment, for nearly two thousand years, has been effecting. The words in verse two,—"That He should give eternal life," tell in brief the

MEANING OF HIS MIGHTY MEDIATION.

Real as that our physical blood is kept vital and pure by contact with the great ocean of oxygen, through breathing, are our spiritual beings vitalized, purified, and supplied with Divine love, joy, and peace, through His praying, and ours, in fellowship with Him. And what the lung and its action are to the blood and oxygen,—their means and point of contact;—that, and infinitely more, is Christ and His praying to the great, Infinite Spirit of God, and to us. Through intercession, He every moment brings us to God, supplies to us the Spirit and life, and sprinkles the blood and *thus He saves us*, and saves us forevermore. (*Heb. 7:25.*)

THE INSTRUMENT OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

Sin is would-be self-government;

every man his own master,—anarchy. But this only makes man Satan's slave, the mere dupe of a merciless despot and tyrant. Salvation brings us under Divine control. It makes God's sweet and holy will, that most beautiful thing in the universe, the dominant power in our life. And this is effected through Priesthood.

Thus God would have governed His chosen people; but in their national pride, Israel asked for a king; someone to fight their battles for them. They desired something more tangible and visible than the unseen God. The interceding priest was the expression of the nation's dependence on God,—its uplifted hands of appeal to Him as its King. Through this means He ruled the nation, and through it, ruled over other nations, making it victorious. See how this comes out in the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. It was when the people confessed to God, and prayed to Him, that He fought without fail, their battles for them and made them more than conquerors.

Ah this is still the secret of victory, —our complete self-surrender to God,—

our weakness giving place to His might. Now all this surrender of self and waiting upon God to work, are realized in Christ. He is *the Waiting One for Whom God works.* All that priesthood means of Divine sacrifice, worship and dependence on God is fulfilled in Christ; therefore He is King. Through the first, He honors God; through the second, God honors Him; and all this He is for us. Glory to His name!

May the day be hastened when He, Who is the Priest-king on the Father's throne, may be the King-priest on His own throne, over all the earth; for He is worthy. Amen.

The Ministry of Praise . .

> By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. —*Heb. 13:15.*

LOOKING back over the past twenty years, or so, it is clear that there has been in progress a gracious revival of prayer. One can scarcely think of its beginnings and not associate there-with the great life and work of the late George Muller and the no less great book, "With Christ in the School of Prayer," by the Rev. Andrew Murray. Of course there were other influences, many and varied, but these two are marked, and in spirit and object, (as the notes in the book testify,) they are closely related.

Many tributaries have continued to flow into and swell this stream of prayer. Prayer "calls," "circles," "sermons,"

"conferences," books, papers and tracts, without number. Prayer "missionaries," "workers," and "warriors," have all contributed to augment its volume and value, until in spirit, understanding, practice and results, it has a place in the Church, to-day unequalled perhaps, since apostolic times.

In homes and churches there are meetings and "all-days" of prayer where little groups gather to wait on God, and, as it were, become adjusted like turbines to the mighty tide of prayer in the Holy Spirit. Thus new motive and motion is given to old machinery and new results are manifest. Thanks be to God for the revival of prayer.

But if this river is to reach its normal, New Testament proportions, if it is to make the desert blossom as the rose, if it becomes the motive power it is meant to be, the war force and measure, making the Church "terrible as an army with banners," and overcoming all the power of darkness; if it shall be known as the great life-force of the Church, ever emanating from its Head and Priest; (*John 17.*) continually sanctifying, uniting, keeping, and making glad all the

children of God; we repeat; if prayer is to reach its normal proportions, and become a spiritual Mississippi, bearing on its bosom the great ships of human need, and the greater cargoes of Divine supply, it must have the deep, broad Missouri tribute of

PRAISE TO GOD CONTINUALLY.

Have we not thought, too much, of praise as optional, a sort of luxury; something we might, without serious results, dispense with? Surely this is due to our not seeing the true place of praise in the Word, and in the will of God concerning us, and that as His priests, it is our sacred duty and privilege to

"ENTER HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE,"

and to maintain the same as a ministry unto Him. Surely our delinquency in this has entailed great loss to ourselves and to the cause, and dishonor to His holy name. The Lord help us, (may we make it more personal,) help me to see this and confess it before Him as a great sin, and seek to

know the glorious provision He has made for our life and service of praise.

We are now considering the word "praise" in its broadest sense, including therein all that is expressive of gratitude, gladness and joy in the Lord.

When Shall we Praise?

The text says "continually;" that means *at all seasons*. No matter what the circumstances, we should ever be in the spirit of praise. In dark and trying times, in sore temptation, in times of need, when weak and weary, when misunderstood, when suffering for righteousness' sake; praise at such times is especially pleasing to God, and brings blessing to the soul. That night in the jail at Philippi must have been one of sore trial to our "beloved brother Paul" and Silas, yet at *midnight* they "sang praises to God" so that the "prisoners heard them." And while they were the great apostles of the Church, the grace by which they triumphed is ours also, and invites us to follow their glorious example.

In the Old Testament, praise and service were subject to limitations of time, etc., but with the continuity of Christ's all-perfect ministry within the vail in our behalf, all this is changed. It is "*by Him*," the grace which He moment by moment gives, that we praise.

Why Should we Praise?

Because it is commanded. It is doubtful if any one thing is more frequently enjoined upon us throughout the entire range of Scripture than this, that we praise the Lord. God meant it to characterize the whole life and service of His people under the *law.* (*Deut. 28;47.*) Then what does He expect of us in this *day of grace!* (See Paul's epistles.)

Because it is exemplified throughout the Word and by all the best saints of the Church. It has been remarked that David was "a man after God's own heart" because he so constantly praised the Lord. We have only to read his Psalms and see his great choir of trained singers! So also the whole spirit of the New Testament saints

is that of gladness and praise.

Because it defeats the enemy. Israel's battles are object-lessons for us. It was *faith in God* and not numbers or weapons, that made them victorious. Their great foe, as the people of God, was not "flesh and blood," but the same who assails us, even the devil and his emissaries. (*See Eph. 6:11,12.*) This helps us to understand the meaning of the seven days, the silence and the shout in taking Jericho: and also Israel's battles under the kings. See for instance the glorious victory of Jehoshaphat as recorded in 2nd. Chron. 20: 1-30. Just read those verses and see (*Verse 22.*) how praise was the pivot on which the victory turned for Israel. May the blessed Spirit teach us to use the praise weapon against the powers of darkness, in these perilous days.

Because of its reflex influence. This opens up a vast region of thought which we can only touch. Praise is a garment to clothe us, a wall to garrison us, a weapon to defend us. It brings freshness, light and vigor into the life. More than fragrance to the flower or flavor to the fruit,

it enriches and beautifies the soul. It is the water at the boiling point, without which there is no power to move. It makes service a joy and the possessor a benediction to all.

Because of what we are. We are the objects of God's saving grace! Oh how this should incite us to praise! We are the children of God's own family, brought "nigh," saying "Abba Father." We are the temples in which the adorable Trinity have come to dwell. We are a royal priesthood to worship. It is our sacred privilege to praise.

Because of the works of God. All the wonders of His creative power in nature say, "Praise ye the Lord." Then think of redemption! His wondrous death! The new creation! The work of Christ in Heaven! The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart! The eternal victory of the cross! His name be praised!

Because of what God is. Who can rightly speak of this! Think of the dead idols and demons which the heathen try to appease. Think of the glorious Being Whose Father-heart is made glad by our

simple trust! How little we know of His wonderful attributes! But one thing we know, *He is Love.* Love created us and created us to love us. Love redeemed us! Loved us in our sins and loved us out of them, and never, while eternity lasts, will He cease to love us! Shall we not praise Him!

Because it glorifies God. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God Then *we* can glorify *Him!!* Praise shows forth His excellencies! All Heaven praises Him! By His grace we are a heavenly people. Why not live as such on earth? We are come to the heavenly fellowship. (*Heb. 12; 22.*) Would we demean ourselves accordingly? Then we must praise! Thus will we "glorify God in our body."

How to Praise.

We are not now thinking of an emotional state to be maintained. Still less of a mechanical performance, but of a mel-

ody and disposition of heart and frame of mind which will often effect the emotional life and express itself in words and songs of praise. A subdued gladness and sobriety in thought and speech, and yet a praise which is really expressed and not suppressed. A thing like the ice-berg, its coldness excepted, clear, beautiful, reflecting the glory of the sun, pointing heavenward; and yet nine-tenths below water.

The venerable William Law used to encourage the chanting of a Psalm at ones' private devotions.

As to outward expression, the variety may be as great as that of the individuals who praise. But for all, the law is the same that the sacrifices of praise should be offered continually "*by Him.*" If we fail to see this, we will fail utterly.

He "Who is our Life is our praise-life. The power by which we praise is in Him.

His praise is ceaseless as His prayer. Not only in His name but by His Spirit and life we praise. He Who is the true Author of the Song of Songs is our glorious Leader in the ministry of praise. May we accept Him as such. Amen.

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